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The Influence of Human Relations and Cooperation upon the Utilization of the Means of Production in Agriculture

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In 1963 the author carried out an investigation into the members of 27 state farms in 6 districts of the Wrocław voivodship, located in the vicinity of Wrocław. In addition to such basic data as sex, education, state of health, living conditions, welfare etc., the human relations were studied with special emphasis upon the frequency of disputes, conflicts, misunderstandings both in work and in private and social activity. Thus the number of penalties, reprimands and remarks from the place of work, social institutions, administrative and normal courts were counted. The evaluations of these incidents and the comments of local social opinion was analysed. An attempt was made to discover the influence of the management, the trade union organisations and the workers' Council upon the relationships between particular workers and their families, and the influence of these relationships on the efficiency of work and on productivity.

By means of interviews an attempt was made to follow the human relationships and the conditions of cooperation from a retrospective and dynamic point of view also, i.e. since 1958. The material collected makes it possible also to evaluate the effects of good working conditions and absence of disputes upon the utilization of the means of production. The intensity of production and of organization, the value of the means of production, including capital goods and livestock, the financial turnover, the value of investments as well as the economic and financial results were taken as a standard. The computing was carried out in terms of one hectare of agricultural land, and in thousands of zlotys per person employed.

Depending upon the appraisal of the local human relations and the state of cooperation between particular staff members, the farms were divided into 3 groups:

(1) Those without disputes among the staff and with good cooperation.

(2) Those with small, temporary disputes which were settled in a relatively short time.

(3) Those with long-standing disputes not settled without special kinds of cooperation.

In 1963 there were 8 farms in the first group, i.e. 30%; in the second, 13 (48.7%); and in the third, 6 (21.2%).

In 1958 the number of farms in these groups were, respectively, 6, 15 and 6. The greatest number of farms went from the second group into the first, then from the third into the second and from the second into the third.

Similarly, the farms were divided according to their production and the extent of their use of the means of production.

In this way there appeared such state farms as:

(1) Had good productivity and high use of the means of production.

(2) Had medium productivity and medium use of the means of production.

(3) Had medium or bad productivity and low use of the means of production.

In 1963, in the first group there were 11 farms (40.7%); in the second, also 11; and in the third 5 (18.6%).

In 1958 the corresponding figures were, 8, 13 and 6.

All these farms on which, during the 1958-1963 period, the human relations improved, also obtained better results in production with more intensive use of the means of production. A worsening of human relations, however, except in one case, did not cause any direct or measurable worsening of productivity.

The farms had similar natural conditions and similar numbers of workers with the same levels of education, periods of work and periods of living at their places of work. It was possible to draw the following conclusions, among others:

(1) The better the human and neighbourly relationships and the better the cooperation among the staff members, the better was the productivity and the higher the level of use of the means of production.

(2) Better human relations had a favourable effect not only on the will to work and on the emotional and moral involvement of the staff, but also on the economic and financial results.

(3) Disputes among the working staff quickly brought to notice and quickly and completely settled had no injurious influence on economic activity.

(4) A farm with a staff who had worked for a long time without conflict and with good human relations and good cooperation, showed a tendency for misunderstandings to be settled quickly, if they occurred,

and for their results, and also their cause, to be removed, as the staff fully understood their effect on their own and the enterprise's interests.

(5) The relationships between the staff members and the management of state farms were taking shape according to the proverb: "measure for measure".